

Suicide Prevention

Reduce Access
to Lethal Means



**IDAHO YOUTH SUICIDE
PREVENTION PROGRAM**

By taking away easy access to suicidal methods or means, families and friends are making a statement to a suicidal person that they care. This action by itself may decrease burdensomeness and increase belongingness, which creates protection for suicidal people.

Firearms: Research proves the best way to keep a suicidal person safe around firearms is to remove firearms from the house temporarily. **Store firearms locked up, off-site** (with friend, relative, law enforcement, etc.) until the person has received mental health services and is deemed safe by a clinician.

If this is not possible, while not as safe, use gun safes or locks and lock up ammunition separately or take it away from the house. Extra attention is needed to keep lock combinations secret and keys away from youth. Consider changing locks and combinations frequently or remove a component from a firearm, such as the firing pin.



Suffocation/Hanging: Although asphyxiation is a leading suicide method, removing access to all ligatures is almost impossible. Remove obvious items such as ropes and ties. Continued close supervision of the suicidal person may be the best way to monitor this means.

Drugs/Medications: Consider dispensing medication on a daily basis and be sure the suicidal person is really swallowing pills (not hiding and hoarding). Medicine lock boxes are widely available for storage, but change the combination often. Alert family and friends not to allow suicidal people access to medicine cabinets or to honor requests from the suicidal person. Over the counter medications, which have the ability to cause death, should also be locked away.

Sharp Objects: Lock up knives, razor blades, and any other sharp objects. Continued close supervision of the suicidal person may be necessary to monitor this means.

Other Means: For means by jumping from high points, monitoring may be necessary. Ask if the suicidal person has recently visited their chosen location. If a car is the method, lock up the keys to all vehicles. For carbon monoxide poisoning, lock up hoses and pipes. Lock up household chemicals that may be ingested or remove them temporarily from the house.

Let the suicidal person know you will be alerting trusted family and friends and advising them to keep means away from the suicidal person.

Regardless of type of method, those who are suicidal need closer, regular monitoring and less privacy to keep them safe.

Reducing access to lethal means sends a clear message of caring, understanding and connection. You can save the life of someone you love.



Families and friends can take actions to save the lives of those they love and care about. If deadly methods are not readily available, a suicidal person may delay or not make an attempt. Please know that:

- Firearms are the most lethal and the most frequently used among suicide methods and should be safely stored.
- Reducing access to lethal means should be part of a suicidal person's safety plan.
- Putting time and space between a suicidal person and their method can save a life.

Learn the Warning Signs

Signs Requiring Immediate Action

- Talking about planning their own suicide
- Acquiring lethal means
- Being hopeless and not wanting to live

If someone exhibits any of these three signs, they must be asked if they are considering suicide.

Other Important Warning Signs

- Previous suicide attempts
- Agitation, especially combined with sleeplessness
- Withdrawal or isolation from friends, family, or activities
- Unexplained or increases in anger, aggression, or irritability
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of being a burden to others
- Nightmares in older youth

All signs are reason for concern and reason to check in with the person. Several signs may be cause for concern of suicide. Warning signs are especially important if the person has attempted suicide in the past.

Youth Suicide Prevention Program

Youth Suicide Prevention
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Idaho Youth Suicide Prevention Program
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Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline
by JANNUS

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emotional or suicide crisis, contact the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline by calling or texting 988.

Some of the information here is courtesy of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Visit their website for more information on suicide prevention for schools at sprc.org.

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